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Graphic  
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# MESSAGE DESIGN POLITICS



# MESSAGE 4

## Graphic Communication Design Research

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***WHAT ARE THE  
POLITICS OF YOUR  
DESIGN AND WHAT IS  
THE DESIGN OF  
YOUR POLITICS?***

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contextualising  
Illustration to  
Inform Sexual  
Consent –  
#JustSoYou-  
Know

Dave Wood



Keywords

Illustration

Rape crisis

Sexual consent

Re-contextuali-  
sation

Steering group

Information pack

This paper will discuss two illustration projects that helped Rape Crisis Tyneside and Northumberland (RCTN) expand their outreach across the North East of England<sup>1</sup>. These were *Hope Solidarity Liberation*, 2017, and *#JustSoYouKnow*, 2018, which ran consecutively over 12 months with second year illustration students. The first project was to produce illustrations to help RCTN to fundraise. RCTN ran this as a competition challenge to the students, with the winning illustrator's work being made into tote bags, mugs, and other merchandise. All the participating illustrators were rewarded with a gallery exhibition where the students could sell their work, and raise additional funds for RCTN. The second project called *#JustSoYouKnow* re-contextualised some of the illustrations from the merchandise competition into a new campaign to aid RCTN's outreach work. The aim of this second project was to counter young people's misunderstanding of sexual consent, and to challenge prevalent myths about what constitutes rape. The illustration project lead chaired an interdisciplinary steering group, to advise RCTN on re-contextualising the illustrations as the core for a new RCTN information pack. This steering group's interdisciplinary team, to help develop the information pack, came from design, illustration, law, forensic science and social science. Through the collegial alliance in the steering group, many new perspectives were discussed that enhanced the visual communication of the sexual consent information cards. This paper will outline how the same sets of illustrations worked across two different contexts, to positively impact on the visual communication of two different RCTN messages in support of women. Throughout these two projects, the illustrators learnt how their skills as visual communicators could be positively employed, and how a re-contextualisation of purpose opened up new communicational situations (Frascara, 2004, p.13) for their illustrations within real-world social issues.

## 01 Introduction and Background

Professor Jorge Frascara argues that visual communication outcomes – designs and illustrations – are ‘fundamentally about performance’ (Frascara, 2004, p.12). The aesthetics within visual communication outcomes are the hooks to grab and retain attention, to allow the audience to understand the intended message being visually communicated. As facilitators for visually communicating intended messages, graphic designers and illustrators operate from a ‘perspective of proximity’, as they craft the visual solution, while their client operates from a ‘perspective of intention.’ What completes this triadic relationship is the intended audience, who interprets the intended message from a ‘perspective of reception’ (Bergström, 2008, pp.32-33). Obviously, to successfully achieve this reception of a visually communicated message, every Visual Communication Design output relies on semiotics to connect the audience with the message.

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From a Pragmatic philosophical position taken from John Dewey (1980), the aesthetic hook is not only a cognitive thing, but it is also emotionally embodied, engaged with, and experienced by, the viewer. It can be argued that aesthetics is 'instrumentally valuable *and* satisfying in itself' (Shusterman, 1991, p.9). Pragmatically, the instrumentality of aesthetics 'is connected to experiential quality and value' (Petersen et al., 2004, p.271), and it is not predefined but emergent through its reception by an audience. To do this, the design and/or illustration 'must be strong enough to emerge clearly from its context. This is done through elements of form and content', and its content 'has to be relevant to the interests of the viewer' (Frascara, 2004, p.58). Frascara reminds us that 'looking is not a passive act. We do not look in order to see; we look to understand, and to find what we want. Signification and relevance are major determinants for calling attention' (ibid.).

This paper builds on this thesis of the aesthetic power within visual communication, to discuss how, in two illustration projects, this was enacted to help support Rape Crisis Tyneside and Northumberland (RCTN) with two different intended messages. As part of RCTN's 40th anniversary year, they collaborated with the illustration pathway of the BA (Hons) Graphic Design degree to use illustration to help RCTN with their aim to challenge rape culture. Rape culture can be defined as:

A complex set of beliefs that encourage male sexual aggression and supports violence against women. It is a society where violence is seen as sexy and sexuality as violent. In a rape culture, women perceive a continuum of threatened violence that ranges from sexual remarks to sexual touching to rape itself.' (Buchwald, E., Roth, M. and Fletcher, P.R., 1994, p.xi).

The subject of rape culture was a prominent issue that needed addressing in society, especially amongst young people and their understanding of sexual consent. RCTN, like many similar rape support centres, have limited financial resources to cover all their outreach work. The two illustration projects that will soon be discussed focused on one set of illustrations produced for one intended message, which were then re-contextualised into a second use with a different intended message. In both cases, the illustrations' aesthetic power to attract and retain attention performed in two different ways. The two projects were *Hope Solidarity Liberation* (2017), and *#JustSoYouKnow* (2018). This paper will first outline, as the client, RCTN's intentions first for fundraising merchandise illustrations to help them towards their £40,000 target in 2018, and then, with the securing of funding from an ERDF Creative Fuse grant, their new intention to use the same illustrations to help RCTN's outreach work with young adults. Each project was examined, by considering how the illustrators' and designers' proximity to the content was re-contextualised with a new message for a different audience's reception. An interdisciplinary steering group, formed from illustration and graphic design, social science, applied science, and law, facilitated this re-contextualisation of illustrations from fundraising merchandise to information cards on sexual consent.

To find ways to visually engage a broader audience through illustrated merchandise, without focusing on any reference to acts of sexual violence.

## **02 Rape Crisis Tyneside and Northumberland**

RCTN is ‘the longest established Rape Crisis Support Service in the UK’, having been operating since 1978 in England’ North East (RCTN, 2017). In September 2017, RCTN’s Co-CEO Sue Pearce launched an exclusive illustration competition with the new second year illustration students on BA (Hons) Graphic Design degree at Northumbria University. RCTN’s advisory creative communications team at Crystlsd brokered this project. The project was integrated as a live brief, directly into a Contextualisation and Interpretation module, by the illustration project lead.

RCTN has helped women and girls who contact them, ‘who identify as Lesbian, Bi, Trans and/or Questioning; Black, Minority Ethnic and Refugee women; and disabled women’ (RCTN, no date). RCTN were contacted in 2017–18 by 667 people who had experienced sexual violence (RCTN, 2019). They wanted to use illustration as a means

to engage with a mass audience beyond the women they help. They wanted illustration to raise much-needed funds in 2018 to help it continue its important work in the region. The significance of 2018 was that it was RCTN's 40th anniversary year, and the Chair of RCTN's Trustees, Sue Griffiths, would be launching an initiative in January 2018 'to raise £40k during our 40th year of campaign' (RCTN, 2019, p.3). As a charity, RCTN is reliant on grants and fundraising, and it had limited financial resources. Without new funding streams, its work to support 'the emotional, psychological and/or physical distress of women and girls who have experienced sexual violence' (RCTN, 2017) would be curtailed. Its outreach work aims 'to educate the public in the nature of sexual violence and its impact' (RCTN, 2017), but the illustrated merchandise was not directly tasked with this aim.

RCTN needed new ways to fundraise, so RCTN challenged the illustrators to create new illustrated fundraising merchandise for its year-long fundraising event in 2018. The challenge for the student illustrators was to find ways to visually engage a broader audience through illustrated merchandise, without focusing on any reference to acts of sexual violence. While RCTN's objective focuses on responding to the extent of physical and sexual violence on women over the age of 13, its merchandise had to address a different need and audience. The merchandise illustrations were to focus on the positive messages of hope, solidarity and liberation. These were three keywords that the women who RCTN had helped had used to describe the support they gained.

Each illustrator was tasked to create a set of six illustrations interpreting these keywords. Only one illustrator's work would be selected in the competition to become printed merchandise, but all the eligible students' work would be exhibited in a gallery. In the next section, the *Hope Solidarity Liberation* illustrated merchandise project will be outlined, before the re-contextualisation of the illustrations will be examined in the second project. Two immediate impacts from this collaboration between RCTN and the illustrators were important to achieve. The first was that the use of illustration would clearly benefit RCTN by helping it to continue its outreach work. The second was that the student illustrators taking part would gain valuable professional development as illustrators. The illustration project lead ensured that this would be through direct contact with RCTN as their client, and the wider opportunities for the illustrators to monetise their illustration skills, such as the gallery exhibition.

### **03 Hope Solidarity Liberation Illustrated Merchandise Project**

The positive impact of illustration to draw people into a new 'communicational situation' (Frascara, 2004, p.13) rests in the power of the aesthetic. Frascara describes three functions of a visual communication outcome that are essential. First, it needs to aesthetically attract audience attention. Second, it needs the aesthetics to retain that attention. Third, it needs to aesthetically communicate its intended message. But aesthetics 'should never become a distraction' (Frascara, 2004, p.85). Visual Communication Design as a design discipline (comprising of graphic design and illustration), has the power to ignore or even belittle the needs of human beings, if its sole purpose is to service the production and consumption of a capitalist society. Thankfully, this is not always true and visual communication design can be neutral. The intent for the commission of a designer or illustrator is what drives the creative outputs that they produce.

In this regard, the illustrators entered the *Hope Solidarity Liberation* project with a sense of responsibility to the aesthetic responses in their illustrations, to address their client RCTN, and to the wider general public needs as RCTN's target audience.

One of the illustrators found working for RCTN as her client both daunting and a big responsibility, when tasked with interpreting the three important RCTN keywords of hope, solidarity, and liberation. The illustrator as a visual communicator is dependent on the success of their illustrations semiotically communicating the required messages to the intended audience, through the careful crafting of the aesthetic to hook their attention. The successful impact of the illustration or design is dependent on the attitudes, behaviour and knowledge of the audience. The audience's reception is socially constructed and the intended meaning is drawn 'from the network of social interactions' (Dourish, 2004, p.99) that the audience have previously experienced, and which inform their world views.

With this in mind, RCTN briefed the illustrators to avoid the literal and the obvious connection to rape and sexual violence. RCTN wanted to see the illustrators' unique, creative, positive interpretations of the three keywords hope, solidarity and liberation. RCTN needed merchandise illustrations that would be aesthetically striking, liberating, and desirable to the merchandise-purchasing general public. The illustration cohort taking part comprised of 10 students, three of whom were international students from South Korea, Indonesia, and Taiwan. They had the freedom to choose the type of merchandise they wished to design for, from the following categories: a) greetings cards, postcards, stationery sets, art prints; b) t-shirts, scarves, tote bags; and c) ceramics, cups, plates, mugs. The illustrators approached this brief in a variety of ways (see Fig. 1) from the abstract to the figurative, and from the spiritual to the metaphorical.

Three illustrators chose to illustrate cards and art prints (a), five illustrators chose to illustrate for t-shirts, tote bags and scarves (b), and two illustrators chose to illustrate on mugs, cups and dishes (c). None of the illustrators had any prior experience of working in these media. So, through the modular tutorial and group crit support, the illustrators' understanding of how the technical requirements and limitations of their chosen medium affected the development of their illustration solutions grew. Some of the issues that they needed to address, such as materiality, caused the most reflection in the cohort. The concepts of printing on fabrics, and the concave and convex surface areas of ceramics, were real-world requirements and limitations. The illustrators' own experimentations around these issues led them to some exciting illustration solutions.

Two illustrators focused on a figurative approach within their six illustrations for t-shirts and greetings cards, creating visual narratives of the re-empowerment and recovery of a young woman in only six illustrations. In a similar way, another illustrator from Seoul employed the shapes and functionality of cups and saucers to tell the story of another young woman's reconnection with her social world. She used a series of interconnecting circular journeys around the rims of stacked dishes (and the outside of cups) to build her illustrated narrative. One illustrator who also chose to illustrate for ceramic merchandise, took a hybrid figurative/abstract approach by choosing a silhouette of a flying figure soaring above the world, using a limited but effective colour palette. Another, also using a silhouette approach, illustrated dance and bodily movement in response to the three keywords. She intended these to be on tote bags, so that the illustrated dancer's movement would be accentuated by the fabric as the tote bag was carried.

One Indonesian illustrator and another from Taiwan used their own cultural references when making a set of illustrated art prints. A traditional Indonesian women's dance called Bedhaya Ketawang was re-interpreted to contextualise the keywords in a more symbolic and abstract way. The Taiwanese illustrator focused on

aspects of spirit as a way to interpret the keywords. In doing so, she created beautifully haunting, non-figurative illustrations that utilised colour and environments to evoke the sense of strong spirit. Finally, one student illustrator pushed himself further into a complete use of abstraction to express hope, solidarity, and liberation as illustrations. He focused on t-shirts and scarves, and experimented with ink splats and geometric shapes to express the personal feelings and journeys to recovery from sexual assault through a raw energy of mark-making.

The pedagogical approach to this live brief was two-fold. Firstly, as a merchandise project RCTN's Co-CEO came in as a client to set the design problem in its context. Then over 12 weeks the student illustrators interpreted the three keywords into their set of six illustrations, targeted to the merchandise options they had chosen. Secondly, at a client presentation in December 2017, RCTN chose the winning illustrations for Crystltd to produce into the merchandise. The RCTN team, comprised of the joint CEO and junior members from across the charity, selected a short list of three illustrators. Part of their criteria focused on the financial implications of the illustrators' chosen material e.g. ceramics, silk scarves, t-shirts, etc. Although aesthetically all the student submissions were strong, the financial costs were something that RCTN had to factor into their final selection. The winning student's illustrations featured a young woman over six illustrations, in a loose narrative of her story of regaining her liberation from sexual violence, visually communicated through her body language. This range of designs provided RCTN with images to use on mugs, tote bags and cards, and it captured the journey of the women who RCTN help – the women who describe this help as a journey of *Hope Solidarity Liberation*.

All the participating student illustrators were invited by RCTN in October 2018 to exhibit their work at the Globe Gallery in Newcastle (see Fig. 2). At this exhibition, this illustrated merchandise was launched, and most of the students also sold original art and prints, raising £270 in commission towards RCTN's £40k 2018 fundraiser. This satisfied the illustration pathway's objectives for the illustrators' professional development. At this exhibition, the designed outcome of the second collaboration with RCTN was also launched. During the 12 weeks of the *Hope Solidarity Liberation* competition, no one had foreseen that these illustrations would later, in 2018, be re-contextualised into a new second-use context. This second rights use of the illustrations will be examined later in this paper, but first the *#JustSoYouKnow* project will be explored.

#### **04 #JustSoYouKnow Sexual Consent Information Pack**

As the *Hope Solidarity Liberation* project was coming to its conclusion in December 2017, the illustration pathway project lead secured a Creative Fuse North grant of £10k from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). This grant money was to fund two illustration projects working directly with local organisations. One £5k project was already in preparation, so RCTN were asked in January 2018 if they would like to continue their collaboration in a new project. This project would follow the same model as the first Creative Fuse North project already being run, and would be comprised of a targeted illustrated publication, supported by the use of the illustrations in a social media campaign.

Working with Jacqui Hall from RCTN, the creative intention of this new collaboration was to repurpose the visual language from some of the *Hope Solidarity Liberation* illustrations into a new context. This new context would utilise the aesthetic power of the illustrations to now help dispel rape myths and to inform young adults



Figure 1: A selection of the Hope Solidarity Liberation merchandise illustrations.



Figure 2: The Response Exhibition at the Globe Gallery, Newcastle (October 2018).

on sexual consent. This approach allowed the illustration pathway team to explore with the students how second rights use of their illustrations can professionally benefit them. Also, a re-contextualised second use of the illustrations they had just created meant that while still studying on their degree they would also benefit from a published outcome that had a real-world impact. RCTN had suggested that the myths surrounding rape were unhelpful when clarifying issues of sexual consent for young male and female adults. In the UK rape is defined as follows:

- (1) A person (A) commits an offence if –
  - (a) He intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis,



- (b) B does not consent to the penetration, and
- (c) A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

(2) Whether a belief is reasonable is to be determined having regard to all the circumstances, including any steps A has taken to ascertain whether B consents. (Sexual Offences Act 2003).

The six rape myths that were important to dispel (Lewis, 2018a) by informing young adults about sexual consent were:

1. Most rapes are committed by strangers;
2. Once a man is sexually aroused, he can't control himself;
3. If the victim has been drinking, she is partly responsible;
4. Victims who have been sexually assaulted are likely to be hysterical, very upset;
5. False allegations of sexual assault are very common;
6. Women like men to be active in pursuing them.

Questions about the difficulty of women and young girls' disclosure of an assault, and thus the naming of the experience as sexual violence, were relevant to answer in this new design project (Lewis, 2018a). The themes for the new illustration project began to develop from conversations with RCTN about rape facts versus myths. But, in order to decide what the re-contextualised illustrations would be visually communicating in the design of a new RCTN publication/social media campaign, further guidance would be needed.

In a second rights use context, the original *Hope Solidarity Liberation* illustrations would be working hard in a new communicational situation, and not all the illustrations produced would be usable. The illustrations that would eventually be selected would have to quickly attract and retain the attention of a different audience, in order for the new information to be effectively visually communicated. To ensure the effectiveness of this new reception from illustrations produced for fundraising, the illustration project lead formed a new interdisciplinary steering group of experts to advise on the new intended message.

The ERDF Creative Fuse grant tendering process in December 2017 had engaged a Newcastle-based design company, Roots and Wings. With this design team on board, the new RCTN *#JustSoYouKnow* project began in April 2018. Through regular steering group meetings, the discussion on rape myths and rape culture focused on issues of informed sexual consent for young adults, and RCTN's requirements for the information pack were outlined (Hall, 2018b). *#JustSoYouKnow* would be an information pack aimed at young women and men aged 16-21, written in an authentic tone of voice, and made freely available. The authentic written tone and the corresponding illustration would need to attract and retain the audience's attention. Eight illustrators' work, from the original cohort of 10, was eligible to be re-contextualised in this new project. This provided the steering group and the design team with 48 illustrations from which to select the eight most relevant images to inform young people on sexual consent.

Over the course of the project, the decision was made to move from the production of a printed book, to the creation of a printed set of information cards. This new *#JustSoYouKnow* printed pack of information cards (see Fig. 3) would need to

bring the myths/scenarios/situations alive to young adults, without seeming to preach. The text used on the cards to address the sexual pressures young people face around making consensual sexual decisions would be punchy, as it needed to convey several parallel points of relevant information. RCTN decided that the written information would challenge perceptions of coercion versus consent, and address issues of self-blame, the stigma in reporting rape and sexual assaults, toxic masculinity and sexual entitlement, and to educate against the normalisation of online social media abuse. The card information would also need to conclude with a “...and the law says this” statement, and point the readers to RCTN’s support services. The Creative Fuse grant funded a print run of 2000 packs.

This paper’s next two sections will examine how the steering group pooled research and expertise, and then guided RCTN to select the best illustrations to use for the most effective design outcome.

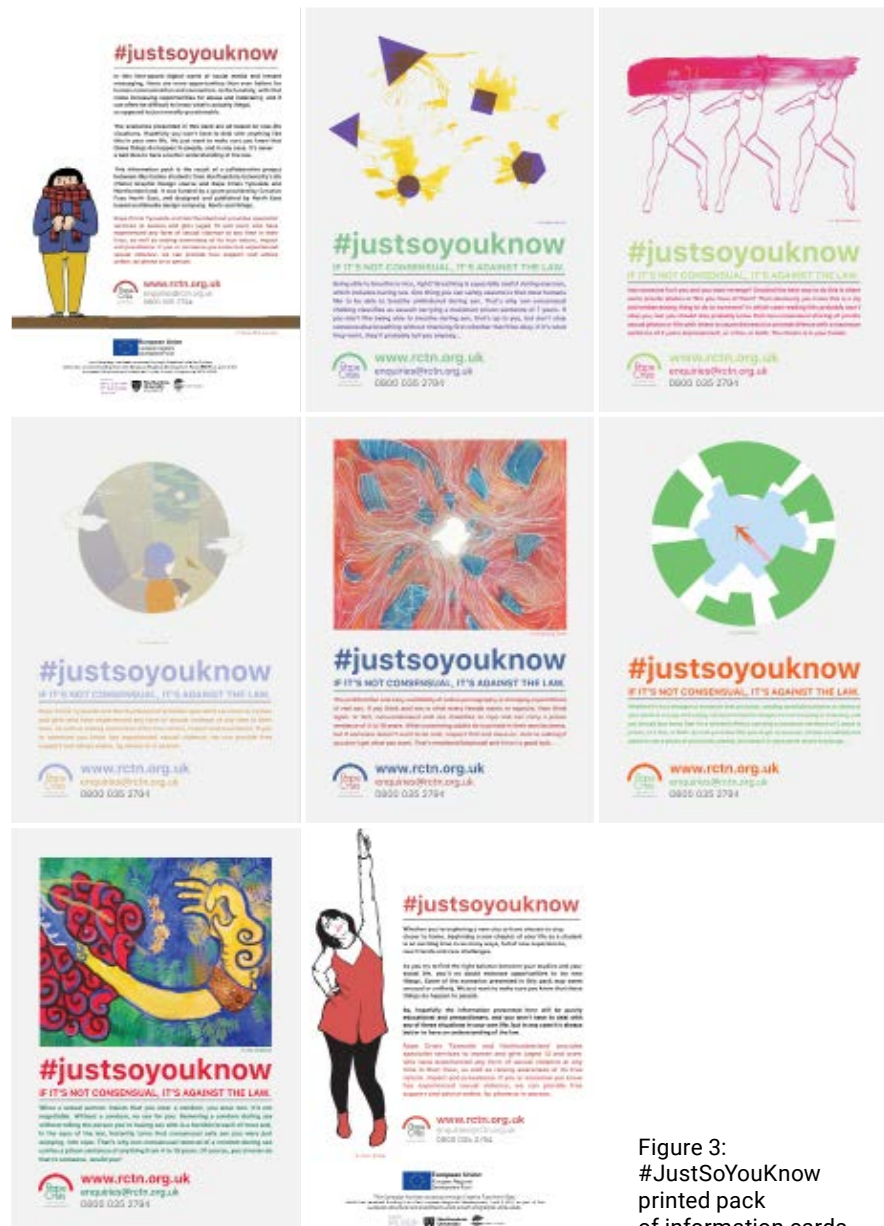


Figure 3:  
#JustSoYouKnow  
printed pack  
of information cards.

## 05 The Steering Group Research Alliance

While the *Hope Solidarity Liberation* project was well underway at the tail end of 2017, the illustration project lead began to prepare for the new RCTN 2018 Creative Fuse project. He knew from RCTN that they were also involved in working with another academic in Northumbria University, and although it was not a prerequisite of the ERDF funding, the illustration lead thought it would be a good collegial move to involve other academic experts in this new RCTN illustration project. As a result, at the end of November 2017 he emailed potential colleagues across Northumbria University's faculties to see if he could set up a collegial alliance as a project steering group.

Through this action to drive new cultural discussions to support the development of the RCTN project, he secured the support of two colleagues to begin such a research alliance: an Associate Professor and Head of Subject for Sociology, International Development, and International Relations and Politics; and an Associate Head of Applied Sciences, Health and Life Sciences, who had previously been a senior Forensic Scientist leading Wetherby Forensic Science Service's sexual offences team. Both colleagues brought their research and experience to the illustration project steering group.

The first official meeting of the steering group wasn't until April 2018, when the *#JustSoYouKnow* project officially began. By this point, the steering group had grown in members. We had brought on board a colleague from the Northumbria School of Law, who could advise the project on the legal implications of sexual consent, and sexual assault. The design team from Roots and Wings, and a student representing the illustrators provided the creative side in the steering group.

Through this research alliance from Visual Communication Design, law, forensics and social sciences the *#JustSoYouKnow* project grew in scope and ambition. Originally the planning was for an illustrated book of some sort, plus the visual assets for an associated social media campaign. Over the course of three steering group meetings between April and June, the designed output gradually morphed into a pack of information cards. It was felt that the book idea would be too constrictive in its ability to connect with the young target audience. Separate cards would be more flexible as a printed format, as cards could be used individually.

Whether a book or an information pack, the central challenge to the design team and to the steering group was that the illustrators' work must be dominantly re-purposed into this new communicational situation. There would be eight out of the original 10 illustrators whose work must be used. The design team estimated that a maximum of 10 myths/scenarios/situations would financially be possible. Through careful planning, the steering group decided that this information pack would feature eight sexual consent scenarios.

## 06 Re-contextualisation of Illustrations

RCTN identified the following six topics that young people currently have to navigate around sexual activity: *choking, anal sex, sexting, stealthing, date rape drugs, and revenge porn* (Hall, 2018a). There were eight illustrators whose work needed to be repurposed. RCTN thought it would be beneficial if Rape Crisis information had its own separate information card (Hall, 2018b). As the young adult target audience for the information pack may or may not be students, it was agreed that there should be two versions of the Rape Crisis card, one aimed at students, and one at non-students (see Fig. 4).

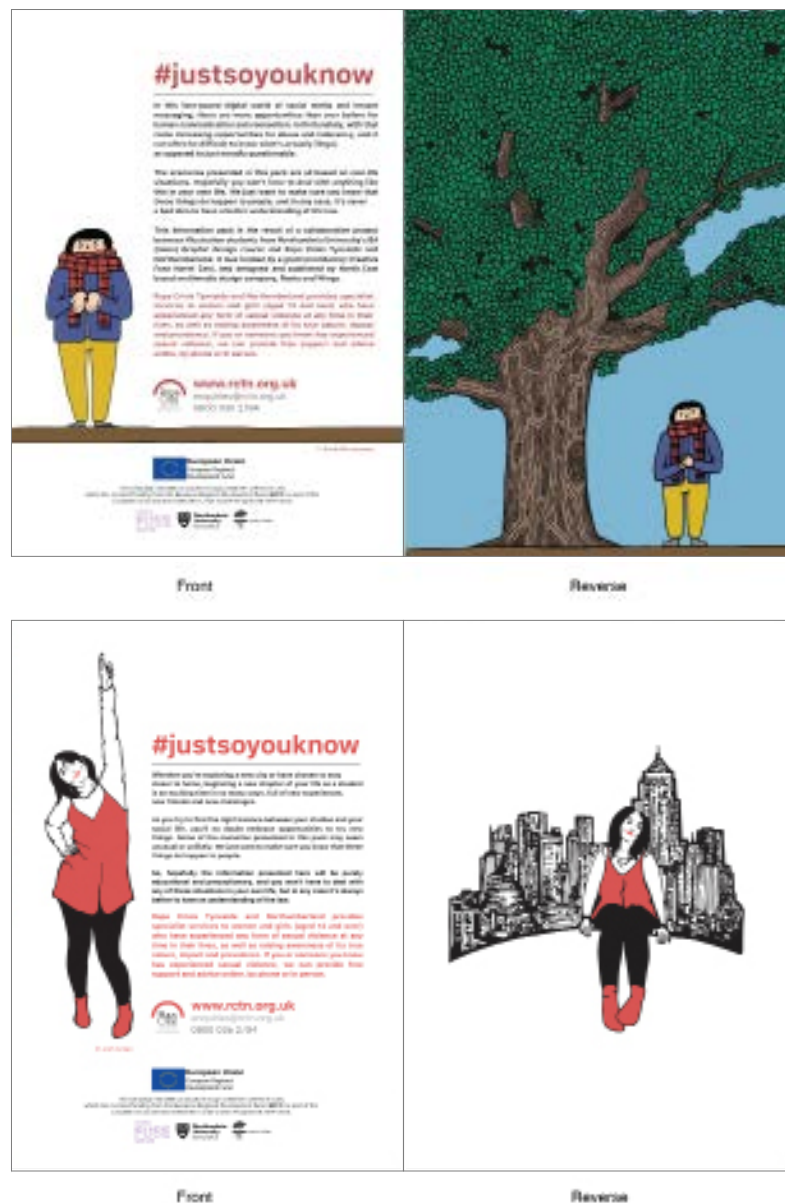


Figure 4: Two different female characters were selected from the eight students' work to begin and end the information pack. One female character was chosen as the pack's first card (left) as the character's body language is a bit nervous in stance, which was a good way to attract and retain a new young reader; the second young woman's body language (right) suggested a confident calm persona as the final card.

This decision brought the number of cards in the pack to eight, which meant one illustrator per card. As each card featured one sexual consent topic, the design team were challenged to select from each students' set of six merchandise illustrations one image that would be the aesthetic hook for the topic of each card. In regard to the two Rape Crisis information cards, the requirement would be to carefully select the illustrator/illustration to set the best tone for each variant audience. Added to this art directing from the design team, the steering group decided the cards would be double-sided, so more targeted information could be contained.

The illustration would be featured on the main information side of the card (see Fig. 3), and on the reverse would be a screenshot<sup>2</sup> of a social media conversation about the featured sexual consent topic. This conversation would be either an existing (but anonymised) actual social media conversation, or a fictionalised version of conversations that RCTNs clients have reported. The language used would be carefully copywritten to contain subtle advice on consent without sounding *preachy* to the young adults. The case was made that the cards would not and could not provide ‘all the answers’ to sexual consent (Hall, 2018b), or make it feel emotionally ‘easy’ for the reader to read (Lewis, 2018b) i.e. the young audience would need to take the subjects seriously.

As the audience’s personal understanding of each topic would emerge from the social media conversations on the reverse, the chosen illustration would not only have to aesthetically attract and retain the reader’s attention but would also have to offer a contrast to the heavier subject detail from the conversation screenshot overleaf. Each card was also colour-coded with a different feature colour to differentiate each topic. All the contextual information about the sexual consent topic was on the illustration side of each card. This included the hashtag, an overview of the card’s topic (copywritten for the young adult reader), RCTN support contact information, and a statement of legality of the featured actions. It was important for educational purposes that this statement of legality was included, and crucial for young men and women to be made aware of the legality of their sexual intent and consent.

With each card’s design visually communicating a separate sexual consent topic, it should all holistically work to facilitate a ‘reasonable belief in consent’ in the young people (Brewis, 2018). The two Rape Crisis information cards would also act as bookends to the separate cards in the pack. On each card’s reverse the feature illustration was used as a full-page image without any text or logo (see Fig. 4).

Once the design of the cards was underway, a decision had to be made about how to contain the cards. The final decision was a budgetary decision in favour of a simple belly band and sticker to seal the pack. The hashtag *#JustSoYouKnow* and RCTN’s details were to be prominently featured on the band. One particular illustration set’s character was selected by the design team to become the *female face* of the pack. This worked well, as when the cards were all collated with the two Rape Crisis information cards placed as bookends, the sticker sealing the belly band naturally worked with the underlying card to show the full illustration of the young woman (see Fig. 5).



Figure 5: The stickers to seal the pack’s belly band featuring the young female character.

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2 This screenshot would be a faux screenshot created by the designers in the style of Facebook, Twitter, etc.

Future visual communication design research could examine how first rights, and then subsequent rights usage of existing illustration(s) can help students not just understand the commercial value of their creative outcomes, but also how far the illustrators' images have the power to visually communicate new meanings when the context is changed by second rights use.



## 07 Positive Impacts and Conclusion

Working with RCTN on two different projects, the student illustrators learnt how one of their illustrations can positively visually communicate two different RCTN messages by changing its context. In the first module-based *Hope Solidarity Liberation* project, the illustrators worked hard on crafting the visual communication of each of their six merchandise illustrations. They understood through research and experimentation how their illustrations would aesthetically attract the general public to purchase the merchandise. This was difficult for them to learn, as many false premises had to first be worked through in tutorials and group crits, for the illustrators to feel confident in their final outcomes.

With the *#JustSoYouKnow* project, the illustrators were exposed in a positive way to the benefits of second rights usage of their existing illustrations. While this project's scope did not include directly teaching the new illustrators to write contractual agreements, it did show them the benefits of retaining the copyright in their illustrations through licensing usage. Illustration agency Handsome Frank and the Association of Illustrators advises that,

Retaining the rights to an image is incredibly important for an illustrator, because over time it opens a potentially huge secondary revenue stream for them [...] you have a way of monetising your previous work without having to create new images (Handsome Frank, 2018).

It was within this professional development scenario that the illustrators' eight pack illustrations were selected and used in a new context to attract and inform young adults on issues of sexual consent. The eight illustrators were centred within the decision-making on the visual communication of the pack cards, with a representative of the student illustrators on the steering group, and the illustration project lead chairing it. This resulted in the use of strong and confident illustrations of young women in the information card packs (see Figs. 4 and 5). Also, some of the illustrators helped RCTN to compile the cards into the packs. In volunteering at the end of the project, they found 'an increased appreciation for the work' which they had created to help RCTN the previous year (Montgomery, 2019). In their final academic year in 2018, all the student illustrators received copies of the compiled *#JustSoYouKnow* information packs for their portfolios.

The involvement of student illustrators in live projects helps them to experience first-hand how to perform within a professional commission, while remaining within the safe environment of continuing study on a degree. The students' collaboration with RCTN over two projects, raised new research questions. Future visual communication design research could examine how first rights, and then subsequent rights usage of existing illustration(s) can help students not just understand the commercial value of their creative outcomes, but also how far the illustrators' images have the power to visually communicate new meanings when the context is changed by second rights use.

These two RCTN projects, *Hope Solidarity Liberation* and *#JustSoYouKnow*, demonstrated how illustration could be used to positively impact on society, to help to counter misdirection and falsehoods around sexual consent. At the private view of the Response illustration exhibition at Newcastle's The Globe Gallery in October

2018, most of the illustrators benefited from selling the framed originals and prints. By raising revenue from their work for themselves they gained crucial commercial validation as illustrators. These sales also benefited RCTN by generating a further £270 in commission towards their 2018 £40k fundraising campaign, and by soft launching *#JustSoYouKnow* to an invited audience. One of RCTN's aims was 'to educate the public in the nature of sexual violence and its impact' (RCTN, 2017). The re-purposing of illustrations created for a RCTN fundraising drive, certainly aided in providing young adults with authentic information on sexual consent. By January 2019, RCTN were enquiring about a second print run, as supporters were asking for more information packs – *#JustSoYouKnow*.



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